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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 001688

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/08/2018  
TAGS: PTER KTFN KISL SA IR  
SUBJECT: MOHAMMED BIN NAYEF ON SAUDI CT EFFORTS

Classified By: DCM David Rundell, reason 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S//NF) SUMMARY. ON 25 OCTOBER 2008, TREASURY DEPUTY SECRETARY ROBERT KIMMITT AND AMBASSADOR FRAKER MET WITH ASSISTANT MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR MOHAMMED BIN NAYEF. THEY DISCUSSED SAUDI COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS, THE PROPOSED CHARITY COMMISSION, IRAN, U.S.-SAUDI SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE NEED TO SHARE INTELLIGENCE IN ALL FORMS. END SUMMARY.

TERROR TRIALS

¶2. (S//NF) MOHAMMED BIN NAYEF (MBN) SPOKE OPTIMISTICALLY ABOUT THE UPCOMING TRIALS OF 900 SAUDIS ARRESTED FOR VARIOUS TERRORISM RELATED OFFENSES, INCLUDING TERROR FINANCE. HE NOTED THAT SOME OF THE ACCUSED WERE DIRECTLY TIED TO AL QAIDA. MBN SHARED HIS ENTHUSIASM THAT THE TRIALS WOULD TRANSCEND THE INDIVIDUALS BEING TRIED, AND SERVE AS A TRIAL OF THE TAKFIRI AL QAIDA IDEOLOGY. THE JUDGES WILL BE WAHHABI SALAFISTS, DEALING A SIGNIFICANT BLOW TO AL QAIDA SHOULD CONVICTIONS BE SECURED. MBN PROFESSED THAT 'WE WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW EVERYTHING,' AND OFFERED THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR SUPPORTS RELEASING CLASSIFIED INFORMATION AND INVITING TV CAMERAS INTO THE COURT ROOM TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION OF SECRET TRIALS. HE SAID THE INDICTMENTS ARE CURRENTLY WITH THE COURTS, WHERE THE SHARIAH JUDGES ARE 'TAKING THEIR TIME TO LEARN THE CASES.'

'GIVE US ANYTHING YOU CAN'

¶3. (S//NF) COMMENTING ON U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS, MBN CONVEYED THAT THE ORDER FROM HIS LEADERSHIP IS TO COMPLETELY OPEN THE SECURITY COOPERATION CHANNEL AND 'IGNORE THE POLITICIANS.' WE MUST SHARE INFORMATION, OTHERWISE THE TERRORISTS WILL WIN, HE PROFESSED. MBN IMLORED KIMMITT TO 'GIVE US ANYTHING YOU CAN, EVEN IF INCOMPLETE. WE WILL TAKE ACTION. WE WILL FOLLOW UP.' HE TOLD KIMMITT, 'IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, WE ARE HAPPY TO RECEIVE IT AND ACT QUICKLY.'

TERROR FINANCE AND RECRUITMENT

¶4. (S//NF) MBN NOTED THE LOW COST OF COMMITTING A TERRORIST ATTACK, AND MENTIONED SCAMS RUN BY TERRORIST CELLS, INCLUDING CONNING MUSLIMS VISITING MECCA ON HAJJ. CONTRADICTING EARLIER PLEAS FOR PUBLIC TRIALS, HE SAID THAT THE MOI DID NOT WANT TO PUBLICIZE A LOT OF FINANCE CASES BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT TO MAKE HEROES. MBN SUGGESTED THAT THE REAL PROTECTION IS PEOPLE, 'THEY MUST BE SHOWN AS WRONG AND OUTCAST,' AND MUST BE 'ISOLATED.' HE STATED THAT THE REAL TEST IS RECRUITMENT; THE GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE SURE THAT IT IS NOT CREATING ADDITIONAL TERRORISTS.

¶5. (S//NF) KIMMITT ASKED IF THE MOI HAS THE AUTHORITY TO GO AFTER SAUDIS SUPPORTING TERRORISM OVERSEAS, TO WHICH MBN RESPONDED THAT 'MUJAHIDEEN ARE NOT THE PROBLEM, ONLY TAKFIRIS

ARE THE PROBLEM AS ONLY TAKFIRIS WILL CARRY OUT THESE OPERATIONS.'

CHARITY COMMISSION

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16. (S//NF) MBN ACKNOWLEDGED THE DEBATE WITHIN THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT OVER THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHARITIES COMMISSION TO OVERSEE MISSIONARY FUNDRAISING AND DISBURSEMENT. HE DESCRIBED TWO CAMPS, ONE IN FAVOR OF A CHARITIES COMMISSION, AND THE OTHER SUPPORTING A REGULATOR INSTEAD.

17. (S//NF) IN THE MEANWHILE, MBN OFFERED THAT 'NO MONEY IS GOING OUT RIGHT NOW.' HE ASSERTED THAT MOI FREEZES ACCOUNTS WHEN IT SEES CHARITY MONEY GOING OUT, AND THAT MOI HAS FROZEN MANY ACCOUNTS. HE STATED THAT AT SOME POINT CHARITABLE AND RELIGIOUS DONATION WOULD NEED TO ONCE AGAIN BE TRANSFERRED OVERSEAS, AND THEREFORE IT SHOULD BE UNDER SUPERVISION. MBN CONCLUDED THAT HOPEFULLY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DISCUSS IT ON MONDAY.

AL QAIDA, TALIBAN AND YEMEN

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18. (S//NF) MBN BELIEVES THAT AL QAIDA IS HURTING FOR MONEY AND IS SUSPICIOUS THAT THE TALIBAN IS TAKING THEIR MONEY. HE SAID THE MOI ENCOURAGES THIS SUSPICION. HE STATED THAT AL QAIDA MAY MOVE TO YEMEN FROM AFGHANISTAN, WHICH WOULD GIVE THE GROUP A PERFECT LOCATION FROM WHICH TO ACCESS SAUDI ARABIA. MBN STATED THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA IS GOING TO RAMP UP FUNDING OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN YEMEN AS A BUFFER

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AGAINST AL QAIDA. HE MENTIONED THAT AL QAIDA IN YEMEN WAS SELLING STOLEN ARTIFACTS TO RAISE MONEY.

IRAN ON THE MOVE

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19. (S//NF) MBN COMPLAINED THAT IRAN IS MOVING INTO ASIA AND AFRICA, RECRUITING PEOPLE. HE WARNED KIMMITT TO 'WATCH THE SHIA' AND 'TRACK THE MONEY GOING TO AND FROM IRAN.'

RUNDELL